

young specimen\*. There are 166 ventral, 1 entire anal, and 50 caudal plates.

The colour is uniform blackish-ash, or black if the epidermis is lost.

The series of teeth are very short; that of the maxillary bone is formed by three smaller ones and a very long and grooved posterior one.

The larger of the two specimens is an adult female, 3 feet 1 inch long; the head is 13 lines, the tail 6 inches. It contained mature eggs,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, without any trace of an embryo.

Mr. Gurney's correspondent adds the following note:—

"The Caffre name for this snake is 'Amafoosamanzi'; it was ploughed up by my man, and the eggs were ploughed up close to it; but whether both † or either of them belong to the snake I cannot say. The Caffres say that it is one of the most poisonous here (?), and that a person bitten by one would die in a few minutes, unless strong remedies could be applied."

XVIII.—*Description of Leptodeira torquata, a new Snake from Central America.* By Dr. A. GÜNTHER.

[With a Plate.]

Two subdivisions may be distinguished among the snakes which I have comprised in the family of *Dipsadidæ*: the one has the body elongated and slender, evidently living chiefly on trees; whilst the other more nearly approaches the *Coronellidæ*, having the body rather stout, and not compressed, and these live on dry ground.

The genus *Leptodeira*, in which I have grouped *Coluber rufescens*, Gm., from South and West Africa, and *Coluber annulatus*, L., from the tropical parts of the American continent, is that which is truly intermediate between the two families mentioned, having entirely the habit of *Coronella*, but with the head remarkably broad and depressed, and the pupil elliptical and erect, as in *Dipsas*, like which they are probably nocturnal animals. Though always directing my attention to the generic differences which exist between animals from different geographical regions, I have not been able to find any between the African and South American species of *Leptodeira*. It is true that Duméril has

\* The presence of a series of larger scales on the back of the tail cannot form a generic character.

† The eggs sent with the snake belong to two species, different in size. The larger ones, apparently belonging to the present species, contained embryos in the first stage of development.

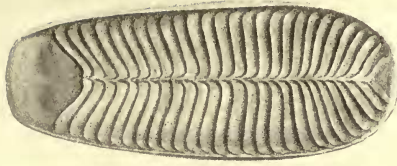
separated the former, referring it to a genus which he calls *Heterurus*, because the subcaudal plates are said to be partly simple and partly bifid. This, however, must be merely accidental in some individual, and an exception, all the specimens which I have examined (and their number is nearly fifty) showing invariably all the subcaudals bifid. A character which I should have been glad to admit into the generic diagnosis of *Leptodeira* was the presence of a posterior grooved tooth; but this character must now fall to the ground, according to my view,—the species which I am about to describe exhibiting the posterior tooth smooth, although strong. It is so similar to *Leptodeira annulata* that, at the first glance, one might be tempted to pronounce it merely a variety in which the neck, usually of a light brown colour in *L. annulata*, has become white. The specific difference, however, may be easily proved by a closer examination, when they will appear in the same relation to each other as *Coronella laevis* and *Coronella cucullata*. According to Duméril's system, the new species would enter the genus *Liophis*.

*Leptodeira torquata*. (Plate X. A.)

*Diagnosis.* Anal bifid. Scales in twenty-one rows. Posterior maxillary tooth longest and strongest, and separated from the others by an interspace. Brownish grey, with a vertebral series of brown spots, some of which are confluent into a zigzag band; neck with a white collar.

*Habitat.* Nicaragua; Island of Laguna. The two typical specimens are in the Derby Museum at Liverpool.

*Description.* The head is rather broad and depressed, the snout rounded; the eye is of moderate size, its vertical diameter being about one-third the width between the eyes; the trunk is rounded, the tail of moderate length, or rather short. The rostral reaches to the upper surface of the snout; the anterior frontals are nearly square, and much smaller than the posterior ones, which, broader than long, are bent downwards to the side of the snout; the vertical is pentagonal, longer than broad, and of somewhat different form in the two specimens; the occipitals are rounded posteriorly. Nostril situated between two nasals; loreal square; two anterior oculars, the lower of which is small, and intercalated between the third and fourth labial shields; two posterior oculars; eight upper labials, the fourth and fifth of which enter the orbit. There is one elongate temporal shield in contact with both the oculars; the other temporals, five in number, are scale-like. The medial lower labial is triangular, and rather small; nine lower labials, the first of which is in contact with its fellow behind the median shield. There are two pairs



B.



A.

